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Healthcare In Ghana Now Very Expensive—Chamber Pharmacy

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The cost of medical care in Ghana will remain high until the government eschews late payments of National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) claims to service providers.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Chamber Pharmacy, Mr. Anthony Ameka explains that the late payment of claims is contributing to the high cost of healthcare in the country absolving members of the chamber from blame.

“Compare Ghana to other West African countries the cost of medical care is higher due to late payments of claims”, he revealed.

According to him, currency fluctuations and interest rate between 30 to 36% are among other factors affecting their operational activities compelling them to increase cost of services.

“The government in reimbursing the service providers do not factor in all these factors so at the end of the day, we have to pass the cost on to patients which makes the cost of medication quite high and I think this is not auguring well for us as a country”, he bemoaned.

He stated the one month arrears recently paid service providers is insignificant to ensure sustainability of the Scheme pleading that funds be released immediately for quality healthcare.

“After engaging government on several platforms promising to pay substantial amount of money we are expecting that government should have done at least six months”

“The government owes the people social responsibility in accessing quality healthcare. I do not think the government wants to collapse the NHIS but what are we seeing now? Do we have quality healthcare in Ghana now” he asked.

The Chamber of Pharmacy, suppliers of drugs to National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) subscribers last month declared a ‘cash and carry’ system due to nonpayment of money owed them by government since April last year.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber of Pharmacy Ghana, Anthony K Ameka, said pharmacies who take NHIS cards have no money and are unable to purchase drugs from suppliers anymore.

He said although they are willing to provide effective healthcare services government is not helping considering the accumulated amount in arrears.

Mr. Amaka indicated that government is the major beneficiary of services provided by these pharmacies and nonpayment of supplied medicines on time makes their work very difficult.

According to him, they have been pressured by producers to make payments but have no money to do that.

“We are overwhelmed by the situation. For a whole year we have not had payment for services rendered and this is gradually crippling our business. Importing medicines these days is very difficult and each time we import, we are expected to pay within 45 days but government does not also pay within that stipulated period. Some of the companies are folding up because government is not settling its indebtedness and owners have to contract loans at a high interest. Foreign companies are now taking over most of the companies in Ghana because the locals are unable to overcome some of these challenges”, he observed.

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